

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A compact head mounted virtual image display unit, the unit comprising:

a microdisplay;

an optical system for directing an image signal for viewing by a user, the image signal being generated in accordance with the microdisplay;

an optical system mounting structure for supporting the optical system within the field of view of only a single eye of the user;

a housing to substantially contain at least the optical system; and

a slidable light shield, integrated within the housing and having an open position and a closed position, wherein the light shield is slidable along a length of an exterior wall of the housing and slidably positioned with respect to the optical system such that, in the open position, the image signal is viewed by the user with background light entering the optical system, and in the closed position, the image signal is viewed by the user with background light ~~at least~~ partially blocked from entering the optical system, wherein the image signal is viewed together with the background light.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The head mounted virtual image display unit of claim 1, wherein the light shield is one of opaque, partially opaque, colored and polarized.